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Book Reviews

Constructive Studies in the Prophetic Element in the Old Testament.

By WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1905. Pp. 142. \$1, net.

The Prophets and the Promise. The Stone Lectures for 1902-3. By WILLIS JUDSON BEECHER. New York: Crowell & Co., 1905. Pp. 427. \$2.

The Hebrew Prophet. By LORING W. BATTEN. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1905. Pp. 351. \$1.50.

These three books appear in the same year, and are instructive in themselves, but especially in their contrasts with each other. The first of the three belongs rather to the category of critical apparatus; the last two, to the sphere of interpretation. The first book is a worthy companion to *The Priestly Element in the Old Testament* by the same author. As in the former work, so also in the present one, Dr. Harper's remarkable power of suggestive analysis is again apparent. To extract and segregate the distinctively priestly and prophetic material found in the Old Testament in such a way as to present the results in an easily intelligible form to the Bible student is a task calculated to stagger the boldest systematizer, but a task in which Dr. Harper seems to have fairly delighted. After a brief treatment of the content, classification, definition, and principles of the prophetic element (Part I), there is an inductive historical study of prophecy and prophetism, extending from the period of the patriarchs and judges down through Amos and Hosea. The nature of the work is best illustrated by the rubrics under which the various periods are treated. E. g., under the period of the patriarchs and judges we have the scope and character of the period, contemporary literary sources (twelve short extracts) later literary sources (Wars of Jehovah and Jasher, Judges, E, J, D, P), monumental sources (Hammurabi code, Tell-el-Amarna letters, stele of Merneptah, "Tale of Two Brothers," etc.), the institutions of the period, and the great characters and events of the period—all accompanied by an exhaustive bibliography. A careful study of this work would lead to a highly specialized knowledge of the subject. This suggests the only criticism that might be ventured upon the book. Is it not too taxing upon the average student, except when used by such a pedagogical genius as Dr. Harper himself? But perhaps the fact that his *Priestly Element* has reached a second edition would suggest a negative answer.

Dr. Beecher's book is an interesting *non-sequitur* to Dr. Harper's

method of induction. The former's method must have been very different indeed. His book seeks a mediating position between the old and the new, but for the most part seems to hold that the old wine is better. He evidently believes in the essential authenticity of the Pentateuch, while endeavoring to show that his conclusions as to prophecy are largely independent of critical theories. The first part of the book, on the personality and activities of the prophet, is suggestive in its main thesis, viz.: "that a manly man is the truest channel of communication between man and God" (p. 85). But the way in which this thesis is supported is not particularly illuminating, as seen in his attempts to separate frenzy from even the lower forms of prophecy, and his resolution of such scenes as I Sam. 10:5-13 into what is practically only the religious fervor of an evangelistic service (p. 74). The real strength and interest of Dr. Beecher's book lie in the second part, "The Promise." Although the form of the presentation is based on the traditional theory of the ever-expanding promise from the covenant with Abraham through David and the prophets, and though his exegesis is at times very doubtful (cf. his use of the text-critically doubtful passage, II Sam. 7:19, pp. 237 ff.), yet the main thesis of this part we regard as a distinct and most helpful contribution to the study of prophecy. Messianic prophecy is construed by Dr. Beecher as promise, and promise is construed as *doctrine* rather than as *prediction*. Compare especially pp. 214, 260, 348, 376, and 404 for the fruitful development of this idea. Whether this conception will justify Dr. Beecher's defense of the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament is, however, very questionable. He must at times give to the *ἵνα πληρωθῇ* so elastic a meaning as practically, at times, to nullify any real predictive element (cf. pp. 334 ff.). But though we may doubt many of Dr. Beecher's exegetical applications of this principle, yet by means of it he shows in a most helpful way the fundamental spiritual unity of prophecy and fulfilment, and thus furnishes a needed corrective for those who have become so completely immersed in the historical interpretation of prophecy as to ignore its profounder spiritual significance.

Dr. Batten's book is strong where Dr. Beecher's book is weak. It gives what we believe to be a much truer, as well as a far more readable, account of the personality and work of the prophet. His treatment of "the sons of the prophets" (chap. iv) is especially instructive. He holds that the false prophets of the later history are simply the prophetic guilds of the earlier day run to seed (p. 58). It is conjectured that the persecution of Jezebel marked the turning point in the history of the orders. The sons of the prophets never recovered from these persecutions, but degenerated into time-serving soothsayers and charlatans (pp. 55 ff.). The chap-

ter on the prophet's call is also suggestive in its psychological analysis of the experiences of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. The method is illustrated by one sentence relative to Amos: "he said he must prophesy because God had spoken; in plain terms he means that *he perceived the condition of things* to which his Israelite neighbors were blind" (p. 80). The chapters on the relationship of the prophet to the state give a picturesque résumé of the political activities of the prophet. The closing chapters, on the prophet's relation to the church and on the prophet's vision, are somewhat one-sided and disappointing. The relationship to the church is considered mainly under the head of the prophetic opposition to the state church and the traditional cultus. It might have been well in this connection to dwell on the doctrine of the remnant and such passages as Isa. 8:11-18. The discussion of the prophet's vision is again almost wholly negative in character. It dwells on the limitations of the vision rather than on its content. Dr. Batten might claim that he is dealing with the prophet rather than with prophecy, with the man rather than with the message. Still, the figure of the prophet deserves to be studied, not only in the atmosphere of his everyday life, but also when wrapped in the splendor of his vision. At this point Dr. Beecher's work furnishes a needed supplement. Two things are symptomatic in their conjunction in Dr. Batten's book—the strongly religious, even homiletical, interest which everywhere pervades it (most helpfully in the discussion of the prophet's call), and at the same time its anti-miraculous bias (Dr. Batten would no doubt affirm emphatically his belief in the supernatural). This bias comes out in a somewhat unfortunate way in his attempts to rationalize some of the miracles; e. g., Elisha's ax (Elisha feels for the ax with a stick, p. 4), or his discovery of the Aramean ambuscades (by means of the sons of the prophets whom Elisha uses as scouts, p. 189), or the slaughter of the old prophet, I Kings, chap. 13, by a lion, i. e., a hired assassin (p. 278). Rationalizing legendary material is usually unprofitable business. But Dr. Batten's book, as a whole, gives an excellent portraiture of one of the most remarkable figures in the history of religion. KEMPER FULLERTON

OBERLIN, OHIO

The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ. BY R. J. KNOWLING, D. D.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905. Pp. 533. \$3.

This book contains the "Boyle Lectures" delivered by Dr. Knowling during the years 1903-5. The lectures are printed apparently without important changes, except that "many passages of length" are inserted, "as being more fitted for theological students." The tone and style of public discourse have been preserved.